

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
St Thomas RC Primary School
Nursery Class
The Moray Council**

29 June 2005

**St Thomas RC Primary School Nursery Class
Chapel Street
Keith
Banffshire
AB55 5AL**

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001, requires that the Care Commission inspect all care services covered by the Act every year to monitor the quality of care provided. In accordance with the Act, the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education carry out integrated inspections of the quality of care and education. In doing this, inspection teams take account of *National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16*, and *The Child at the Centre*. The following standards and related quality indicators were used in the recent inspection.

National Care Standard	Child at the Centre Quality Indicator
Standard 2 – A Safe Environment	Resources
Standard 4 – Engaging with Children	Development and learning through play
Standard 5 – Quality of Experience	Curriculum Children's development and learning
Standard 6 – Support and Development	Support for children and families
Standard 14 – Well-managed Service	Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

Evaluations made using HMIE quality indicators use the following scale, and these words are used in the report to describe the team's judgements:

Very good : major strengths
 Good : strengths outweigh weaknesses
 Fair : some important weaknesses
 Unsatisfactory : major weaknesses

Reports contain Recommendations which are intended to support improvements in the quality of service.

Any Requirements refer to actions which must be taken by service providers to ensure that regulations are met and there is compliance with relevant legislation. In these cases the regulation(s) to which requirements refer will be noted clearly and timescales given.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher, staff and the education authority. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website: www.carecommission.com and HMIE website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report you should write either to the Care Commission or to HM Inspectorate of Education at the address below. If you are still dissatisfied with our services, you can contact your member of the Scottish Parliament (or, if you prefer, any other MSP). You can also contact the Scottish Parliamentary Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and Agencies.

Complaints Coordinator
Headquarters
Care Commission
Compass House
Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Hazel Dewart
HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Crown Copyright 2005

Care Commission
HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of St Thomas RC Primary School Nursery Class The Moray Council

Introduction

St Thomas RC Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in March 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. An inspection of the primary school was carried out at the same time by HMIE and is the subject of a separate report. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 12.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the primary school. The accommodation was one large self-contained classroom with toilet and cloakroom facilities. Children had timetabled access to the gym hall on a weekly basis and an outdoor play area and sensory garden were available.

The nursery accommodation provided a bright, warm, safe and secure environment. It was well maintained and in a good state of repair. Staff implemented good hygiene practices and daily risk assessments of the premises. Overall, to enhance the environment, more children's work needed to be displayed.

The layout of the room allowed children the opportunity to play independently or in small groups. The nursery had recently undergone changes to put in a new kitchen which had reduced the available space. Staff were considering ways of improving children's access to resources. Staff needed to provide children with more opportunities for creative and imaginary play including more access to arts and craft materials.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff knew the children well and were kind, caring and encouraging towards them. They were patient and had a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Most of the children were motivated. However, some found it difficult to settle to a task and more challenging activities were needed to sustain their interest.

The nursery nurse had recently taken on the responsibility for planning. She was well supported by the headteacher. Plans were closely related to the key aspects of children's development and learning. Staff assessed children regularly and noted their

progress. Assessment information was not yet used consistently to inform next steps in children's learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Children were happy in the nursery and comfortable with the routines. They were developing friendships and cooperated well with one another during play. Staff had created a warm and caring environment and made effective use of praise to develop children's confidence. They encouraged children to dress and undress for outdoor play. Children had a good understanding of the hand-washing routine. They needed more opportunities to take responsibility and be independent when selecting their activities.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Children talked and listened to adults and one another during play. Staff needed to plan a wider range of listening and talking activities for different purposes. Children accessed books independently and listened to stories on tape. Several of them found it difficult to concentrate during story telling. Staff provided opportunities for children to develop skills in early writing and made some use of children's stories around the room. However, these opportunities needed to be further extended. Most children could recognise their own name in print.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were learning about their own and other cultures. They experimented regularly in sand or water play and were investigating how things work. Staff organised activities to develop children's understanding of early mathematics. However, these needed to be more regular and give children opportunities to solve simple problems. Children were using the computer independently. They had enjoyed activities to learn about their senses. Staff planned to arrange outings and visitors to the nursery to develop children's knowledge of their local environment.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was fair. Children had used paint, glue and dough in art and craft activities. They needed to express themselves freely using a wider range of materials and techniques. Children played imaginatively in the home corner. Staff did not change the focus or resources regularly enough to maintain children's interest. Children listened to classical music and moved to music on occasions. Opportunities to sing and use musical instruments were not regular enough.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children had access to the school gym hall once a week for energetic play. They took part in ring games and were learning to throw and catch. Staff made use of the outdoor area to give children opportunities to run on the grass and climb and slide on the climbing frame. They planned to borrow large wheeled toys from the toy library. Staff needed to make more regular use of the outdoor area and plan for daily energetic play activities. Children were developing control of their fingers and hands through use of a range of appropriate tools.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

The nursery offered good support to children and their families. The senior nursery nurse had good relationships with parents and children and responded to them in a very caring and friendly manner. Staff knew the children well and were responsive and sensitive to individual needs. Parents, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion, expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the nursery. A few would like their children to have a wider variety of foods at snack time.

Parents had regular opportunities to talk informally with staff and were kept informed of activities in the nursery through the primary school's written information, newsletters and the parent notice board. They were encouraged to be more involved with nursery and an appointments calendar was set up. Parents helped with a lending library which was being reorganised at present.

There were good transition and induction arrangements for all children moving on to P1 at St Thomas RC Primary School. For alternative schools, the headteacher or the P1 teacher of each school would be invited to meet the child at nursery.

The nursery had developed links with other professional support agencies including language support for early years. A helpful written policy in relation to children with additional support needs had been developed.

Management

Standard 14

The management of the nursery was good overall. The nursery had undergone major changes this year in relation to leadership responsibilities. The local authority had redeployed the nursery teacher and the senior nursery nurse now had responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group. The headteacher was actively involved in a formal and informal basis, visiting the nursery regularly and meeting with staff on a weekly basis. The senior nursery nurse had developed very good relationships with parents and promoted good teamwork. She was clearly committed to improving further the quality of the service provided and both staff were very hardworking.

There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place providing useful guidance for staff and parents. The senior nursery nurse had been trained on child protection policy.

Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and relevant training opportunities were available. Suitably qualified and experienced staff were employed. However, to comply in full with regulation 13 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and in order to meet the criteria for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council, all staff must achieve the required care qualifications.

Parents were asked to complete a questionnaire annually and their responses were considered. However, the nursery did not have a current development plan and monitoring and evaluation of the service was at a very early stage of development. The headteacher should develop systematic, rigorous procedures to

monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision and plan for improvement.

Key strengths

- The bright and welcoming environment.
- The confident children.
- The hard work and commitment of staff.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The recommendations noted at the time of the previous inspection in relation to fire safety and security issues have been actioned.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should provide more challenging activities to meet the needs of all children.
- Staff should review the layout of resources to make them more readily accessible to children.
- Staff should improve the programme for expressive and aesthetic development as detailed in this report.
- The headteacher should develop systematic, rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision and plan for improvement.

Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors have asked the pre-school centre and education authority to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report. Where requirements are made, the action plan should include timescales to deal with these. The plan will be available to parents and carers. In liaison with the pre-school centre and education authority, Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors will monitor progress to ensure improvements are in line with the main findings of the report.

Margaret Irons
Care Commission

Alison Watson
HM Inspectorate of Education